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Reading Room
Ret. Mr. Kent.

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Assistant Director, National Estimates

FROM: Deputy Director Central Intelligence

You might be interested in the attached memorandum
on German rearmament prepared by [redacted] whose
background I can explain to you if you are interested.
Possibly you know it.

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ALLEN W. DULLES

Encl.

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REARMAMENT BY GERMANY

The vital problem of whether or not Western Germany should be permitted to have an army has been much debated in Germany ever since September 1950 when the New York Conference of Foreign Ministers of the United States, United Kingdom and France published a communiqué on the participation of the German Federal Republic in the common defense of Europe.

During my many trips to Germany (eleven in 1950 and nine in 1951) I had occasion to witness a strong fluctuation in the reactions of the Germans to this vital issue. While it is not possible to state with any certainty what the majority of the German people feel towards a new German Army, the following opinions were expressed at meetings and speeches held in Germany, in German newspaper articles and in conversations I had with a great many Germans:

1. We cannot leave the defense of Europe alone to America, England, France and the smaller powers. Our fate is sealed with the West. We can survive only if we line up with the Atlantic Powers. Our contribution in the military and armament field is an important step towards this necessary integration. That is the official view of the Western German Government.

2. The Social Democrats in Germany who are as much opposed as Dr. Adenauer to any deal with the Russians, are at the same time opposed to any rearmament. They are skeptical of the idea of a Western European Federation. The armament issue is used by them merely as an instrument for obtaining more independence and freedom from all controls. They deem it to be their mission as the largest party in opposition to the present German Government to force the present cabinet to increase its demands for unreserved and unconditional political equality.

In their eyes the political status is the all important factor. They refuse to commit themselves on the armament issue.

At the same time they intimidate the Germans by declaring that any public endorsement by the German Government of a military contribution would only precipitate war between East and West and lead to inevitable destruction of all of Germany. It is their contention that the critical period of survival is from now up to 1953. Even if Germany agreed to create German divisions, it would take at least two to three years before an army fully equipped and able to resist any invasion would be ready to fight. Consequently, it would be suicidal for Germany to take any steps towards rearmament unless during the interim period the Allies have in Germany armed forces in sufficient numbers

so that they can withstand on the Elbe line any invasion. Indeed, this argument made quite a deep impression.

3. The large camp of veterans in Germany, of which there are millions, is watching developments with the closest interest. They have formed Veterans Organizations headed by Nazi generals who are making irresponsible and aggressive speeches. They are little interested, if at all, in becoming part of Western Europe. In fact they have contempt for French military leadership and little respect for England and feel superior to any American combat soldier. Unconditional surrender did not teach them any lesson. They are advocating a strong, powerful and dominating Germany and look to the day of reestablishing a unified country with boundaries as they existed in 1937. If necessary this must be accomplished by force or threat of force. Some of the leading veterans are calling criminals and traitors the Germans who conspired for the overthrow of Hitler and had to make the supreme sacrifice in July 1944.

Thus, the appraisal of the German anti-Nazi underground movement is coming to the forefront again. Unfortunately, those who condemn the patriotic anti-Hitler Germans are more vocal than those who put up a defense in favor of the persons who were convicted by the German people's tribunal and hanged. This is a sad drama to watch in present-day Germany.

Unquestionably, the resurgence of the power of the Veterans Organizations is menacing and instills the good democrats with fear and skepticism as to what the future will bring.

4. The number of persons who advocate a neutralized and de-militarized Germany is relatively small. They wish to disentangle Germany from any ties or alliance whether with the Eastern or the Western World. They believe that Germany can be independent and best survive if it is not involved in the East-West struggle. It is their hope that Germany being centrally located, having 80 million people, and great economic resources and power may be destined to play the role of umpire between the two World Powers. This movement is headed by Pastor Niemoeller and Professor Nowak and the former Minister of the Interior, Heinemann. The followers are mainly Protestant and oppose the strong Catholic trend of Dr. Adenauer.

5. Pacifistic thinking is not much developed, much less than after World War I. In general the new generation which is not politically minded, is anti-militaristic, against regimentation, uniforms, parades and above all they are war-weary. Their urge to live in peace is partly quite extreme. The well-known political leader, Carlo Schmid, once stated that it is better to live with a healthy body in intact homes even though under a Soviet regime rather than to lie with broken bones in cellars and trenches and to sacrifice oneself for some nebulous belief of democratic freedom.

6. There is also a growing sentiment, which is now subconscious but nevertheless strong, that any war in which a divided Germany

becomes engaged is bound to be fratricidal. It is inevitable that the Western Germans would have to fight and kill Germans in the East and that, therefore, any war in which Germany takes part on the side of the Allies must result in a civil war among Germans. This perspective that Germans will have to shoot their own countrymen is a great deterrent to any ready acceptance on the part of Germany to make a military contribution.

I may add, it is often overlooked here that an agreement made by the present German cabinet on this armament issue would not be effective unless ratified by the Parliament. As far as this ratification is concerned, it is debatable whether a simple majority suffices. The basic principle of the new German constitution was designed to be anti-military, therefore the organization of any army even under Allied control is clearly contrary to the fundamental theory reflected in the constitution.

In the circumstances, it would be unwise to ask the Chancellor to sign an agreement on making a contribution to the common defense unless one is assured that he has the necessary support in the German Bundestag. This support depends entirely upon Schumacher and his very large party.

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November 2, 1951.